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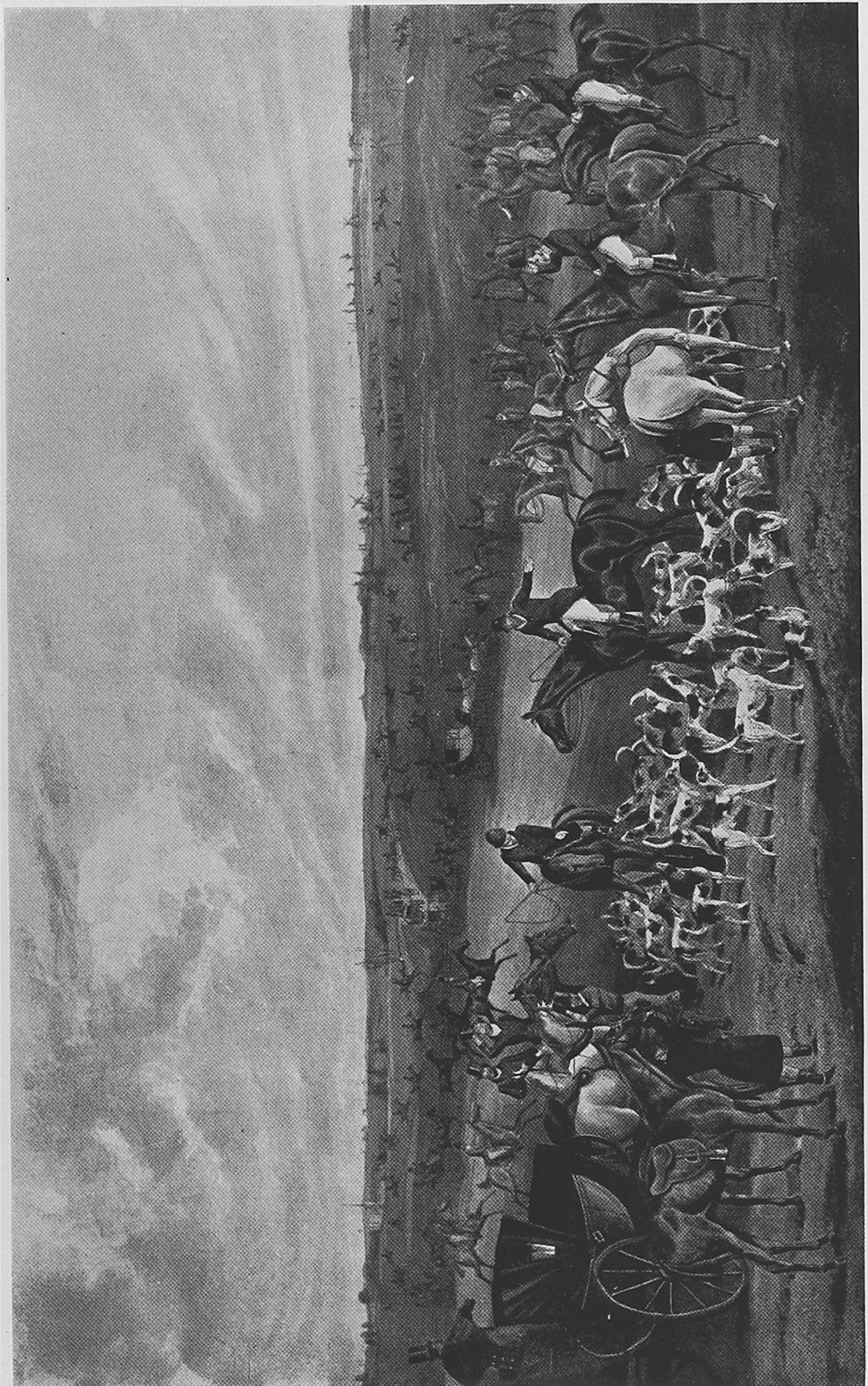
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Drawn and Etched by H. Aiken

Mr. Osbaldeston
No. I of "The Quorn Hunt." From an exhibition of Old English Sporting Prints. Galleries of M. Knoedler & Co., Fifth Avenue, New York

ENGLISH FOX-HUNTING

IT IS a hackneyed enough remark, that both ancient and modern writers make sad work of it when they attempt a description of heaven. To describe a run with fox-hounds is a not much-easier task; but to make the attempt with any other county than Leicestershire, in our eye, would be giving a chance away. Let us then suppose ourselves at Ashby Pasture, in the Quorn country, with Mr. Osbaldeston's hounds. Let us also indulge ourselves with a fine morning in the first week of February, and at least two hundred well-mounted men by the covers side. Time being called—say a quarter past eleven, nearly our great-grandfathers' dinner hour—the hounds approach the furze-brake, or the gorse, as it is called in that region. “*Hark in, hark!*” with a slight cheer, and perhaps one wave of his cap, says Mr. Osbaldeston, who has long hunted his own pack, and in an instant he has not a hound at his horse's heels. In a very short time the gorse appears shaken in various parts of the cover—apparently from an unknown cause, not a single hound being for some minutes visible. Presently one or two appear, leaping over some old furze which they cannot push through, and exhibit to the field their glossy skins and spotted sides. “Oh you beauties!” exclaims some old Meltonian, rapturously fond of the sport. Two minutes more elapse: another hound slips out of cover, and takes a short turn outside, with his nose to the ground and his stern lashing his side—thinking, no doubt, he might touch on a drag, should Reynard have

been abroad in the night. Hounds have no business to *think, thinks* the second whipper-in, who observes him; but one crack of his whip, with “Rasselas, Rasselas, where are you going, Rasselas? *Get to cover, Rasselas!*”; and Rasselas immediately disappears. Five minutes more pass away. “No fox here,” says one. “Don't be in a hurry,” cries Mr. Cradock, “they are drawing it beautifully, and there is rare lying in it!” These words are scarcely uttered, when the cover shakes more than ever. Every stem appears alive, and it reminds us of a corn-field waving in the wind. In two minutes the sterns of some more hounds are seen “flourishing” above the gorse.* “*Have at him there again, my good hounds—a fox for a hundred!*” reiterates the Squire†—putting his finger in his ear, and uttering a scream which, not being set to music, we cannot give here. Jack Stevens (the first whipper-in) looks at his watch. At this moment, ‘John White,’ ‘Val. Maher,’ ‘Frank Holyoake’ (who will pardon us for giving them their *noms de chasse*) and two or three more of the fast ones, are seen creeping gently on towards a point at which they think it probable he may break. “Hold hard there,” says a sportsman; but he might as well speak to the winds. “Stand still, gentlemen; pray stand still,” exclaims the huntsman; he might as well say so to

*Technical for the motion of a hound's stern or tail, when he first feels a scent, but is not able to *own* or *acknowledge* it.

†When Mr. Osbaldeston had the Quorn hounds, three of the four packs which hunted in the same county with his own were the property of noblemen; so, for the sake of distinction, his friends conferred on him the familiar title of ‘the Squire.’

the sun. During the time we have been speaking of, all the field have been awake—gloves put on—cigars thrown away—the bridle-reins gathered well up into the hand, and hats pushed down upon the brow.

At this interesting period, a Snob^f just arrived from a very *rural* ‘country,’ and unknown to any one, but determined to witness the start, gets into a conspicuous situation: “Come away, Sir!” hollas the master (little suspecting that the Snob may be nothing less than one of the Quarterly Reviewers). What mischief are you doing there? Do you think you can catch the fox?” A breathless silence ensues, at length a whimper is heard in the cover—like the voice of a dog in a dream: it is Flourisher, and the Squire cheers him to the echo. In an instant a hound challenges—and another—and another. ‘Tis enough. “*Tally-bo!*” cries a countryman in a tree. “He’s gone,” exclaims Lord Alvanley; and, clapping spurs to his horse, in an instant it is in the front rank.

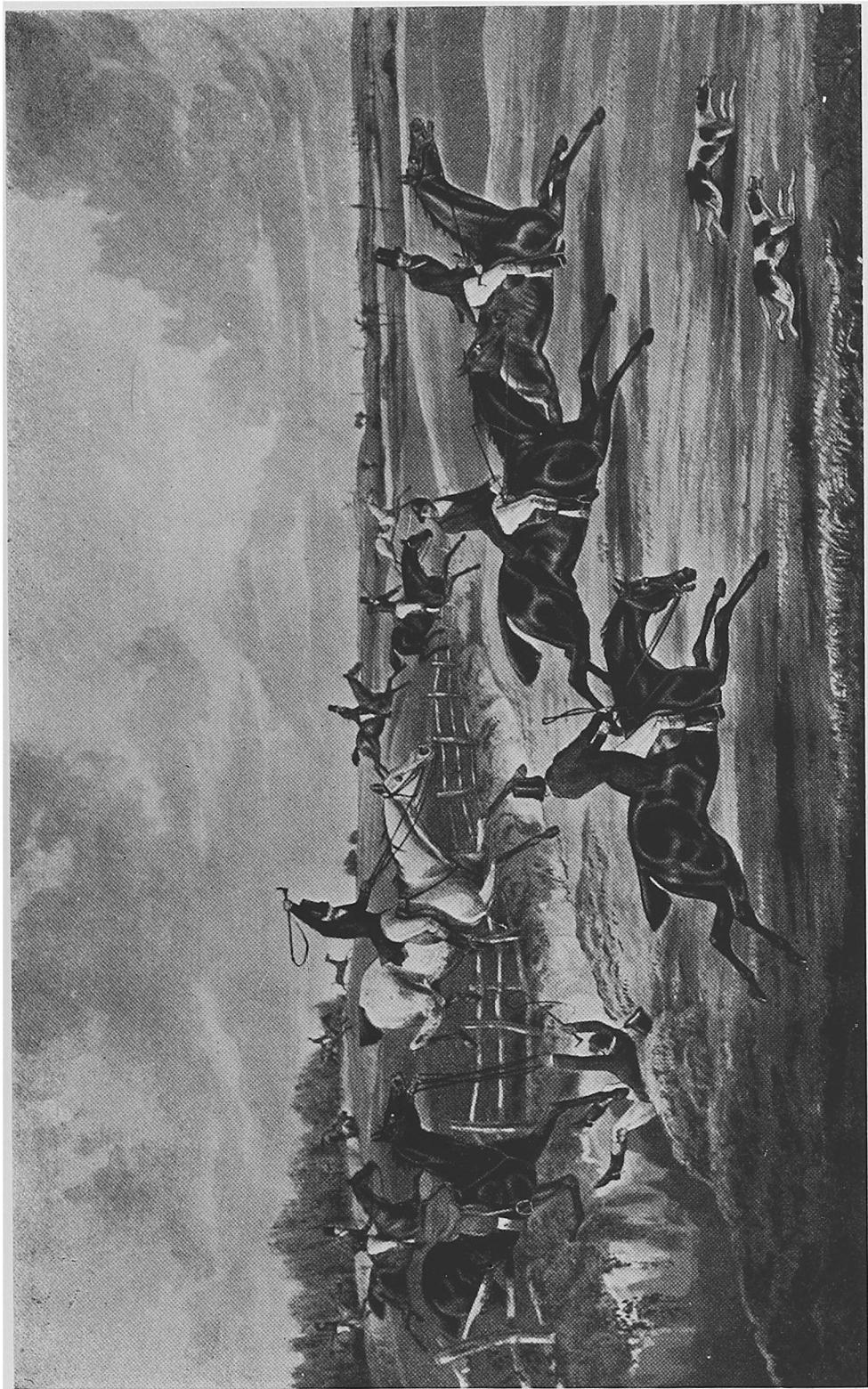
As all good sportsmen would say, “Ware hounds!” cries Sir Harry Goodricke. “Give them time,” exclaims Mr. John Moore. “That’s right,” says Mr. Osbaldeston, “spoil your own sport as usual.” “*Go along,*” roars out Mr. Holyoake, “there are three couple of hounds on the scent.” “That’s your sort,” says ‘Billy Coke,’^g coming up at the rate of thirty miles an hour on *Advance*, with a label pinned on his back, “*She Kicks*”; “the rest are all coming and there’s a rare scent to-day, I’m sure.” Buonaparte’s Old Guard, in its best days, would not have stopped such men as these, so long as life remained in them.

^fWe know nothing of the derivation of the word ‘Snob’; it is certainly not a classical one, but either that or Tiger is too often applied to a total stranger, who ventures to show himself in the ‘swell countries,’ as they are called.

^gNephew to Mr. Coke of Holkham; his famous mare, *Advance*, is dangerous in a crowd, and thus the necessity of a label.

Only those who have witnessed it can know in what an extraordinary manner hounds that are left behind in a cover make their way through a crowd, and get up to the leading ones of the pack, which have been fortunate in getting away with their fox. It is true they possess the speed of a race-horse; but nothing short of their high mettle could induce them to thread their way through a body of horsemen going the best pace, with the prospect of being ridden over and maimed at every stride they take. But, as Beckford observes, “ ‘Tis the dash of the fox-hound which distinguishes him.” A turn, however, in their favour, or a momentary loss of scent in the few hounds that have shot ahead—an occurrence to be looked for on such occasions—joins head and tail together, and the scent being good, every hound settles to his fox; the pace gradually improves; *vires acquirit eundo*; a terrible burst is the result!

At the end of nineteen minutes the hounds come to a fault, and for a moment the fox has a chance,—in fact, they have been pressed upon by the horses and have rather over-run the scent. “What a pity!” says one. “What a shame!” cries another—alluding, perhaps, to a young one, who would and could have gone still faster. “You may thank yourselves for this,” exclaims Osbaldeston, well up at the time, Clasher looking fresh; but only fourteen men of the two hundred are to be counted—all the rest *coming*. At one blast of the horn, the hounds are back to the point at which the scent has failed, Jack Stevens being in his place to turn them. “*Yo doit! Pastime,*” says the Squire, as she feathers her stern down the hedge-row, looking more beautiful than ever. She speaks! “Worth a thousand by Jupiter,” cries John White, looking over his left shoulder



Drawn and Etched by H. Alken

No. IV of "The Quorn Hunt." From an exhibition of Old English Sporting Prints. Jack Stevens
Lord Brudenell Galleries of M. Knoedler & Co., Fifth Avenue, New York

as he sends both spurs into Euxton, delighted to see only four more of the field are up. Our Snob, however, is amongst them. He has "gone a good one," and his countenance is expressive of delight, as he urges his horse to his speed to get again into a front place.

The pencil of the painter is now wanting; and unless the painter should be a sportsman, even his pencil would be worth little. What a country is before him!—What a panorama does it represent!—Not a field of less than forty—some a hundred acres—and no more signs of the plough than in the wilds of Siberia. See the hounds in a body that might be covered by a damask table-cloth—every stern down, and every head up, for there is no need of stooping, the scent lying breast high. But the crash!—the music!—how to describe these? Reader, there is no crash now, and not much music. It is the tinker that makes great noise over a little work, but at the pace these hounds are going there is no time for babbling. Perchance one hound in ten may throw his tongue to inform his comrades, as it were, that the villain is on before them, and most musically do the light notes of vocal and far-famed Venus fall on the ear of those who may be within reach to catch them. But who is so fortunate in this second burst, nearly as terrible as the first? Our fancy supplies us again, and we think we could name them all. If we look to the left, nearly abreast of the pack, we see six men going gallantly, and quite as straight as the hounds are going; and on the right are four more, riding equally well, though the former have rather the best of it, owing to having had the inside of the hounds at the last two turns, which must be placed to the chapter of accidents. A short way in the rear, by no means too much so to enjoy this brilliant

run, are the rest of the élite of the field, who had come up at the first check; and a few who, thanks to the goodness of their steeds, and their determination to be with the hounds, appear as if dropped from the clouds. Some, however, begin to show symptoms of distress. Two horses are seen loose in the distance—a report is flying about that one of the field is badly hurt, and something is heard of a collarbone being broken, others say it is a leg; but the pace is *too good* to inquire. A crackling of rails is now heard, and one gentleman's horse is to be seen resting, nearly balanced, across one of them, his rider being on his back in the ditch, which is on the landing side. "Who is he?" says Lord Brudenell to Jack Stevens. "Can't tell, my Lord; but I thought it was a queerish place when I came o'er it before him." It is evidently a case of peril, but the pace is *too good* to afford help.

Up to this time, 'Snob' has gone quite in the first flight; the Dons begin to eye him, and, when an opportunity offers, the question is asked—"Who is that fellow on the little bay horse?" "Don't know him," says Mr. Little Gilmour (a fourteen-stone Scotchman, by-the-bye), ganging gallantly to his hounds.—"He can ride," exclaims Lord Rancliffe. "A tip-top provincial, depend upon it," adds Lord Plymouth, going quite at his ease on a thoroughbred nag, three stone above his weight, and in perfect racing trim. Animal nature, however, will cry "enough," how good soever she may be, if unreasonable man press her beyond the point. The line of scent lies right athwart a large grass ground (as a field is termed in Leicestershire), somewhat on the ascent; abounding in ant-hills or hillocks, peculiar to old grazing land, and thrown up by the plough, some hundred years since, into rather high

ridges, with deep, holding furrows between each. The fence at the top is impracticable—*meltonicè*, “a stopper”; nothing for it but a gate, leading into a broad green lane, high and strong (with deep slippery ground on each side of it). “Now for the timber-jumper,” cries Osbaldeston, pleased to find himself upon Clasher. “For heaven’s sake, take care of my hounds, in case they may throw up the lane.” Snob is here in the best of company, and that moment perhaps the happiest of his life; but, not satisfied with his situation, wishing to out-Herod Herod, and to have a fine story to tell when he gets home, he pushes to his speed on ground which all regular Leicestershire men are careful, and the death-warrant of the little bay-horse is signed. It is true he gets first to the gate, and has no idea of opening it; sees it contains five new strong bars, that will neither bend nor break; has a great idea of a fall, but no idea of refusing; presses his hat firmly on his head, and gets his whip-hand at liberty to give the good little nag a refresher; but all at once he perceives it will not do. When attempting to collect him for the effort he finds his mouth dead and his neck stiff; fancies he hears something like a wheezing in his throat; and discovering quite unexpectedly that the gate would open wisely avoids a fall, which was *booked* had he attempted to leap it. He pulls up then at the gate; and as he places the hook of his whip under the latch, John White goes over it close to the hinge-post, and Captain Ross, upon Clinker, follows him. The Reviewer then walks through.

The scene now shifts. On the other side of the lane is a fence of this description: it is a newly-plashed hedge, abounding in strong growers, as they are called, and a yawning ditch on the further side; but as is peculiar to Leicestershire and

Northamptonshire, a considerable portion of the blackthorn, left uncut, leans outward from the hedge, somewhat about breast-high. This large fence is taken by all now with the hounds—some to the right and some to the left of the direct line—but the little bay horse would have no more of it. Snob puts him twice at it, and manfully too, but the wind is out of him, and he has no power to rise. Several scrambles, but only one fall, occur at this ‘rasper,’ all having nearly enough of the killing pace; and a mile and a half farther, the second horses are fallen in with, just in the nick of time. A short check from the stain of sheep makes everything comfortable; and, the Squire having hit off his fox like a workman, thirteen men, out of two hundred, are fresh mounted, and with the hounds, which settle to the scent again at a truly killing pace.

“Hold hard, Holyoake,” exclaims Mr. Osbaldeston (now mounted on Blucher), knowing what double-quick time he would be marching to, with fresh pipes to play upon and the crowd well shaken off; “pray don’t press ’em too hard, and we shall be sure to kill our fox. *Have at him there*, Abigail and Fickle, good bitches. See what a head they are carrying! I’ll bet a thousand they kill him.” The country appears better and better. “He’s taking a capital line,” exclaims Sir Harry Goodricke, as he points out to Sir James Musgrave two young Furrier hounds, who are particularly distinguishing themselves at the moment. “Worth a dozen Reform Bills,” shouts Sir Francis Burdett, sitting erect upon Sampson, and putting his head straight at a yawner. “We shall have the Whissendine brook,” cries Mr. Maher, who knows every field in the country, “for he is making straight for Teigh.” “And a bumper, too, after last night’s rain,” holloas Captain Berkeley,

determined to get first to four stiff rails in a corner. "So much the better," says Lord Alvanley, "I like a bumper at all times." "A fig for the Whissendine," cries Lord Gardner, "I am on the best water jumper in my stable."

The prophesy turns up. Having skirted Ranksborough gorse, the villain has nowhere to stop short of Woolwell-head cover, which he is pointing for; and in ten minutes or less, the brook appears in view. It is even with its banks, and "Smooth glides the water, where the brook is deep." "Yooi, OVER he goes!" holloas the Squire as he perceives Joker and Jewell plunging into the stream, and Red-rose shaking herself on the opposite bank. Seven men out of thirteen take it in their stride; three stop short, their horses refusing for the first time, but come well over the second; and three find themselves in the middle of it. The gallant 'Frank Forester' is among the latter; and having been requested that morning to wear a friend's new red coat, to take off the gloss and glare of the shop, he accomplishes the task to perfection in the bluish-black mud of the Whissendine, only then subsiding after a three days' flood. "Who is that under his horse in the brook?" inquires that good sportsman and fine rider, Mr. Green, of Rolleston, whose noted old mare had just skimmed over the water like a swallow on a summer's evening. "Only Dick Christian," answers Lord Forester, "and it is nothing new to him." "But he'll be drowned," exclaims Lord Kinnaird. "I shouldn't wonder," observes Mr. William Coke. But the pace is *too good* to inquire.

The fox does his best to escape: he threads hedge-rows, tries the out-buildings of a farmhouse, and once turns so short as nearly to run his foil; but—the perfection of the thing—the hounds turn

shorter than he does, as much as to say—*die you shall*. The pace has been awful for the last twenty minutes. Three horses are blown to a stand-still, and few are going at their ease. "Out upon this great carcass of mine; no horse that ever was foaled can live under it at this pace, and over this country," says one of the best of the welter-weights as he stands over his four-hundred-guinea chestnut, then rising from the ground, after giving him a heavy fall—his tail nearly erect in the air, his nostrils violently distended, and his eyes almost fixed. "Not hurt, I hope," exclaims Mr. Maxse, to *somebody* whom he gets a glimpse of through the openings of a tall quick-set hedge which is between them, coming neck and croup into the adjoining field, from the top bar of a high hog-backed stile. His eye might have been spared the unpleasing sight, had not his ear been attracted to a sort of *procumbit-humibos* sound of a horse falling to the ground on his back, the bone of his left hip indenting the greensward within two inches of his rider's thigh. It is young Peyton, who, having missed his second horse at the check, had been going nearly half the way in distress; but from nerve and pluck, perhaps peculiar to Englishmen, but very peculiar to himself, got within three fields of the end of his brilliant run. The fall was all but a certainty; for it was the third stiff timber-fence that had unfortunately opposed him, after his horse's wind had been pumped out by the pace; but he was too good to refuse them, and his horse knew better than to do so.

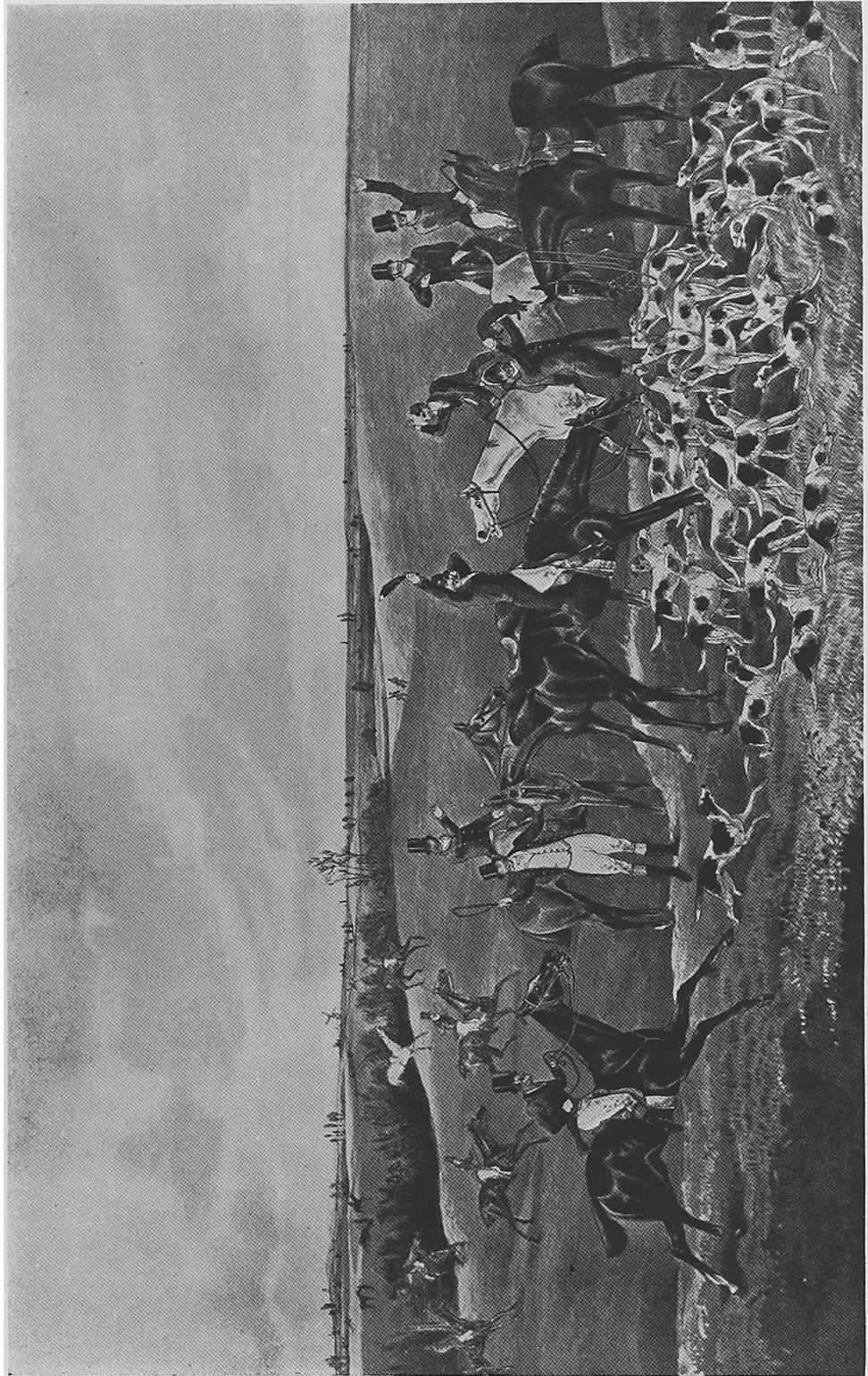
The *Aeneid* of Virgil ends with a death, and a chase is not complete without it. The fox dies within half a mile of Woolwell-head, evidently his point from the first; the pack pulling him down in the middle of a large grass field, every hound but one at his brush. Jack Stevens,

with him in his hands, would be a subject worthy of Edwin Landseer himself: a black-thorn which has laid hold of his cheek has besmeared his upper garments with blood, and one side of his head and cap are cased in mud, by a fall he has had in a lane, his horse having alighted in the ruts from a high flight of rails; but he has ridden the same horse throughout the run, and has handled him so well, he could have gone two miles further if the chase had been continued so long. Osbaldeston's who-hoop might have been heard to Cottesmore, had the wind set in that direction, and every man present is ecstatic with delight. "Quite the cream of the thing, I suppose," says Lord Gardner, a very promising young one, at this time fresh in Leicestershire. "The cream of everything in the shape of fox-hunting," observes that excellent sportsman, Sir James Musgrave, looking at that moment at his watch. "Just ten miles, as the crow flies, in one hour and ten minutes, with but two trifling checks, over the finest country in the world. *What superb bounds are these!*" added the baronet, as he turned his horse's head to the wind. "You are right," says Colonel Lowther, "they are perfect. I wish my father had seen them do their work to-day." Some of the field now come up, who could not live in the first flight; but as there is no jealousy here, they congratulate each other on the fine day's sport, and each man turns his head towards home.

A large party dine this evening at the old club, where, of course, this fine run is discussed, and the following accurate description of it is given by one of the oldest members, a true friend to fox-hunting, and to all mankind as well: "We found him," said he, "at Ashby Pasture, and got away with him, up-wind, at a slapping pace over Burrow Hill, leaving

Thorpe Trussells to the right, when a trifling check occurred. He then pointed for Ranksborough gorse, which some feared, and others hoped, he might hang in a little, but he was too good to go near it. Leaving that on his right also, he crossed the brook to Whissendine, going within half a mile of the village, and then he had nothing for it but to fly. That magnificent country, in the direction of Teigh, was open to him, and he showed that he had the courage to face it. Leaving Teigh on the right, Woolwell-head was his point, and in two more fields he would have reached it. Thus we found him in the Quorn country; ran him over the finest part of Lord Lonsdale's, and killed him on the borders of the Belvoir. Sir Bellingham Graham's hounds once gave us just such another tickler, from the same place, and in the same time, when the field were nearly as much beaten as they were to-day."

But we have left Snob in the lane, who, after casting a longing eye towards his more fortunate companions, who were still keeping well in with the hounds, throws the rein over the neck of the good little bay horse, and walking by his side, that he may recover his wind, inquires the way to Melton. Having no one to converse with, he thus soliloquizes as he goes: "What a dolt have I been, to spend five hundred a year on my stable in any country but this! But stop a little: how is it that *I*, weighing but eleven stone four pounds with my saddle, and upon my best horse, an acknowledged good one in my own country, could neither go so fast nor so long as that heavy fellow, Maxse; that still heavier Lord Alvanley; and that monster Tom Edge, who, they tell me, weighs eighteen stone, at least, in the scales." At this moment, a bridle-gate opens into the lane, and a gentleman in scarlet appears,



THE DEATH

The *Aeneid* of Virgil ends with a death, and a chase is not complete without it. The fox dies within half a mile of Woodwell Head, evidently his point from the first: the pack pulling him down in the middle of a large grass field, every hound but one at his brush.

Drawn and Etched by H. Alken

Hon. Col. Lowther

Mr. Osbaldeston

Sir James Musgrave
Jack Stevens
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with his countenance pale and wan, and expressive of severe pain. It is he who has been dug out of the ditch in which Jack Stevens had left him, his horse having fallen upon him, after being suspended on the rail, and broken three of his ribs. Feeling extremely unwell, he is glad to meet with Snob, who is going his road—to Melton—and who offers him all the assistance in his power. Snob also repeats to him his soliloquy, at least the sum and substance of it, on which the gentleman—recovering a little from his faintness by the help of a glass of brandy and water at the village—thus makes his comment: “I think, Sir, you are a stranger in this part of the world.” “Certainly,” replied Snob, “it is my first appearance in Leicestershire.” “I observed you in the run,” continued the wounded sportsman, “and very well you went up to the time I fell, but particularly so to the first check. You then rode to a leader, and made an excellent choice; but after that period, I saw you taking a line of your own, and anticipated the fate you have met with. If you remain with us long, you will be sure to find out that riding to hounds in Leicestershire is different from what it is in most other countries in England, and requires a little apprenticeship. There is much choice of ground; and if this choice be not judiciously made, and coupled with a cautious observance of pace, a horse is beaten in a very short time. If you doubt my creed look to the events of this memorable day.” Snob thanks him for his hints, and notes them in his book of memory.

The fame of Snob and his little bay horse reaches Melton before he walks in himself. “That provincial fellow did not go amiss today,” says one. “Who was that rural-looking man on a neatish bay

horse—all but his tail—who was so well with us at the first check,” asks another, “who himself could not get to the end, although he went ‘a good one’ three-parts of the way?” There is no one present to answer these questions; but the next day, and the next, Snob is in the field again, and again in a good place. Further inquiries are made, and satisfactory information obtained. On the fourth day, a nod from one—a “how do you?” from another—“a fine morning,” from a third—are tokens good-humouredly bestowed upon him by some of the leading men; and on the fifth day, after a capital half-hour, in which he had again distinguished himself, a noble *bon-vivant* thus addresses him,—“Perhaps, Sir, you would like to dine with me today; I shall be happy to see you at seven.”

“Covers,” he writes next day to some friend in his remote western province, “were laid for eight, the favorite number of our late King; and perhaps his majesty never sat down to a better-dressed dinner in his life. To my surprise, the subject of fox-hunting was named but once during the evening, and that was when an order was given that a servant might be sent to inquire after a gentleman who had had a bad fall that morning over some timber; and to ask, by the way, if Dick Christian came alive out of a ditch, in which he had been left with a clever, young thoroughbred on the top of him.” The writer proceeds to describe an evening, in which wit and music were more thought of than wine—and presenting, in all respects, a perfect contrast to the old notions of a fox-hunting society. But we have already trespassed on delicate ground, and perhaps filled as much space as an *excursus* of this nature should ever claim.

“NIMROD.”

From the Quarterly Review, London.